

addresses those beneficiaries who need assistance with their medications: a review of the Medicare+Choice program reveals that seniors who join HMOs—whom HMOs market to—are younger and healthier than those in fee-for-service Medicare. This tells us that the older, sicker seniors are not getting drug benefits.

My bill addresses their needs. It begins with five chronic diseases that have high prevalence among seniors and whose treatment will show improvement in beneficiaries' quality of life and reduce Medicare's overall expenditures. This bill provides coverage after an annual \$250 deductible is met, with no copayment for generics and a 20% copayment for brand-name drugs. The Agency for Health Care Policy and Research will review available data on the effectiveness of drugs in treating these conditions, and based on AHCPR's review, the Department of Health and Human Services will determine the drugs to be covered. Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBM) under contract on a regional basis with the Health Care Financing Administration will negotiate with pharmaceutical companies to purchase these drugs and will administer the benefit.

This bill covers five major chronic conditions, but we know that there are others that should be covered as well. The legislation provides a process for the Institute of Medicine to determine the effectiveness of this benefit and the Medicare savings it produces, and to recommend additional diagnoses and medications that should be considered for coverage.

Mr. Speaker, modern medicine has the capability of doing extraordinary things. But no medical breakthrough, no matter how remarkable, can benefit patients if they can't get access to it. This bill is a matter of common sense: if Medicare beneficiaries can secure the medications they need, they will be able to manage their conditions, and will be much less likely to require extended and costly inpatient care. This legislation is a first step, a major step, toward making this happen. I urge my colleagues to join me in providing a solid package of prescription drug benefits that will modernize Medicare for the 21st century for the millions of Americans who depend on it.

HAPPY 100TH ANNIVERSARY LUTHERAN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICE OF MICHIGAN

HON. JAMES A. BARCIA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 1999

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, nothing is more precious than our children, and nothing is more important than our families. An organization that celebrates and assists both of these assets is one truly worthy of recognition. I am very happy to tell you that this Sunday, May 16th, Lutheran Child and Family Service of Michigan will hold its 100th Anniversary Worship Service in Frankenmuth, celebrating the organization's founding on May 9, 1899, and its century of accomplishment.

A resolution adopted by the Saginaw Valley Pastors' Conference of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, led to the establishment of

Lutheran Child and Family Service of Michigan. It was a response to the need for assistance to children who were left homeless by a terrible fires in the Thumb area of Michigan. This was the initial chapter in a proud history of serving tens of thousands of Michigan's children and families through twenty-two service sites in the Lower Peninsula.

During this past century of championship, Lutheran Child and Family Service of Michigan was developed specialized foster care services to assist children with intensive treatment needs, and has become one of the largest providers of foster care services throughout Michigan. It is the largest provider of intensive in-home family preservation through its "Families First" program. It maintains three residential facilities throughout the state for adolescent women, emotionally and mentally impaired boys and girls, and its Lutheran Home in Bay City that provides treatment for adolescent boys. It is the largest private provider in Michigan in the placement of state wards into permanent adoptive homes, having placed 200 children last year alone. It helps children with AIDS with out-of-home placement. The Lutheran Adoption Service was also chosen as a pilot agency for developing an automated client information system, the Integrated Information System.

There is no doubt that many people will face difficulties during their lives. At those times, responsible assistance coupled with sensitive caring go a long way towards helping to ease problems. Robert Miles, the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Lutheran Child and Family Service, and all of the wonderful people associated with this fine organization can take pride in all that they have done, and all that they continue to do each and every day.

Mr. Speaker, I urge you and all of our colleagues to join me in wishing Lutheran Child and Family Service of Michigan a most joyous 100th anniversary, and many more happy ones to come.

SAVE OUR CHILDREN FROM GUN VIOLENCE

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 1999

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, why won't this Congress listen to the American people and allow us to pass common sense laws to keep guns out of the hands of children?

I was optimistic when I first learned the other body would take-up amendments drafted to keep guns away from our children. I thought they may set an example for the House to follow by putting politics aside to save our children from gun violence.

But what happened? The other body defeated a simple, common sense measure that would have tightened regulations on the sale of guns at gun shows.

I ask you, why is this a political issue? How many more children will have to die before Congress wakes up and passes laws to save young lives?

I want you to know that we will not give up. We will only fight harder for what the American people want—common sense measures to keep guns away from our kids and off our school campuses. My office alone has heard from thousands of people throughout this country who support my legislation, the Children's Gun Violence Prevention Act. Today, a young student on Long Island let me know that her school sent a petition to the Speaker of this House, asking him to address the issue of children and guns.

Now more than ever, we need to hear from every school and from every parent in this nation. Call, write, e-mail—flood the halls of Congress with your demands—let this Congress know that you want meaningful legislation passed to save our children from gun violence. Every day that goes by with more silence, we lose 13 more kids.

THE FEC REFORM AND
AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1999

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 14, 1999

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, we tend to take our elections for granted, only briefly focusing attention when there is a disputed outcome or, more recently, to bemoan the lack of voter participation. This unfortunate detachment by the voting public is the result of many different factors, one of which is the lack of confidence in our election process. It is long past the time for Congress to recognize the vital importance of our election process and the need to shore up and strengthen our democratic election system. We can start by reforming the Federal Election Commission (FEC). I am confident that we can give the Federal Election Commission the necessary mandate and direction to better carry out its responsibilities.

As the ranking Democrat on the two House committees that directly oversee the Federal Election Commission, the House Administration Committee and the Treasury, Postal Service and General Government Appropriations Subcommittee, I feel a special responsibility to do everything I can to make sure this agency functions with maximum fairness and efficiency. As Congress prepares to wrestle with campaign finance reform, it is important to note that even the most promising reform is meaningless unless the FEC is able to carry it out. Helpful that the 106th Congress will pass Shays-Meehan, I am determined to see that the FEC is equipped at the earliest practicable time to enforce both the letter and spirit of this much needed measure.

To that end I am today introducing the FEC Reform and Authorization Act of 1999.

This bill, which I think my colleagues on both sides of the aisle can support, does not propose radical changes at the FEC because, quite frankly, radical change is not needed. As my colleagues know, in January the respected firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers delivered to Congress the results of a \$750,000 independent audit of the FEC that was ordered last year in the FY99 Treasury-Postal Appropriations Act. To many people's surprise, the